

Testimony of Congressman Chris Stewart  
National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands Subcommittee  
House Natural Resources Committee  
Regarding H.R. 6240 and H.R. 2882  
Legislative Hearing - June 23, 2022  
10:00 AM

H.R. 6240 will clear an old reversionary clause on the title to a parcel of land owned by the University of Utah. This action will allow innovative Utah businesses in the healthcare industry to maintain their contributions to the local economy and medical science. The land is in Salt Lake City in an area that would be difficult for the Bureau of Land Management to manage. The public benefits of medical research in this area far outweigh any benefit of reversion to BLM.

When the BLM transferred the land to the University of Utah in 1965, the federal government retained a reversionary interest on the title. The expansion of the University's research capabilities naturally sprouted new businesses related to the research. These businesses employ around 14,000 Utahns, bringing economic growth and technological advancement to the area. Displacing these businesses now would reverse decades of economic progress, effectively terminating the employment of thousands and disrupting key innovation concerning the health and well-being of citizens.

The parcel sits in the middle of a major metropolitan area and has the infrastructure to match. Furthermore, the parcel is separated from most BLM lands by a sizable margin, making it an impractical piece of land for the Bureau to be concerned about. In sum, reversion to government management would be a fruitless burden for the federal government.

Let me be clear- this bill does not authorize the transfer of federal land to the University of Utah; rather, it simply clears the cloud on the title to land that the university has had for 60 years. Congress has the authority to clear that cloud, and it is in the best interest of the public to do so.

This body is also considering H.R. 2882 to extend the Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area which is partially in my district and partially in Mr. Horsford's district in Nevada. Having this region designated as a national heritage area has been helpful in driving tourism and preservation to historic sites. Honoring the legacy of the Mormon Pioneers who learned to make a living in the West Desert is important to my constituents.